

Message Text

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FOLLOWING SENT ACTION ROME FROM MILAN DEC 20
REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION

QUOTE

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR GARDNER'S DEC 13-14 MILAN VISIT: A WRAP-UP

1. SUMMARY. AMBASSADOR GARDNER'S TRIP TO MILAN WAS SUCCESS IN EVERY WAY. HE HAD FRANK AND HEALING LUNCHEON DISCUSSION WITH INDRO MONTANELLI AND LEADING STAFF OF IL GIORNALE. IN EVENING HE GAVZ EXTREMELY WELL-ATTENDED SPEECH AND HELD QUESTION PERIOD AT DINNER AFTERWARD FOR BLUE-RIBBON GUESTS WHO WERE IMPRESSED BY AMBASSADORS DEPTH AND KNOWLEDGEABILITY ON WIDE RANGE OF COMPLEX ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH GIORNALE EDITOR MONTANELLI AND HIS TOP FIVE ASSISTANTS (MINUS ENZO BITTIZAM WHO WAS OUT OF TOWN) OCCURRED AT AMB'S INVITATION AT LUNCH HOSTED BY CONGEN IN AMBASSADOR'S HONOR. DISCUSSION WAS CONDUCTED IN FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE WITH BOTH SIDES EXPRESSING VIEWS CANDIDLY AND IN NON-POLEMICAL MANNER. MONTANELLI AND CO. TOLD US LATER THEY WELCOMED OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE THIS
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FRANK, OFF-THE RECORD DISCUSSION. WHILE MONTANELLI AND HIS ASSISTANTS

MAY STILL HAVE RESERVATIONS CONCERNING CERTAIN US POLICIES, SESSION SERVED TO CLEAR AIR OF ANY DOUBTS THEY MAY HAVE HAD OF AMBASSADOR'S AND CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S VIEWS OF POLICY TOWARD COMMUNISM IN ITALY WHICH WAS CHIEF ISSUE.

3. BIG BUGABOO BOTHERING MONTANELLI WAS US POSITION TOWARDS EUROCOMMUNISM IN GENERAL AND TOWARDS PCI IN PARTICULAR. AMBASSADOR REVIEWED STATEMENTS OF PRES. CARTER, SECY. VANCE AND NSC ADVISOR BREZINSKI AS WELL AS HIS OWN PRIVATE AND PUBLICLY STATED VIEWS ON SUBJECT. HE ADDED THAT LEFTIST MEDIA UNFORTUNATELY SOUGHT OUT "SFUMATURE" OR PHRASES WHICH THEY COULD SEIZE UPON TO MAKE POINT THAT CARTER ADMINISTRATION MIGHT NOT BE THOROUGHLY OPPOSED TO EUROCOMMUNIST ADVANCES AND PARTICIPATION IN COALITION GOVZRNMENTS. MONTANELLI MAINTAINED THAT MESSAGE HAD TO BE STATED LOUD, CLEAR AND OFTEN. AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENTS SHOULD RULE OUT ANY POSSIBILITY, NOW OR IN FUTURE, THAT EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES COULD EVER EVOLVE INTO ANYTHING MORE THAN TRADITIONAL MARXIST-LENISIST PARTIES. MONTANELLI WENT ON TO SAY THAT, EVEN IF BERLINGUER WERE TO PARTICIPATE IN COALITION GOVERNMENT OF PCI WERE TO BECOME PARTY OF RELATIVE MAJORITY, IT WOULD NOT BE LONG BEFORE HE WOULD BE REMOVED AND SUFFER SAME FATE AS DUBCEK.

4. AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY AND TACTICALLY UNWISE FOR CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO MAKE SUCH CATEGORICAL JUDGMENTS IN PUBLIC BUT THAT US POSITION WAS CLEAR. WE DID NOT WANT TO SEE PCI OR ANY OTHER COMMUNIST PARTY COME TO POWER OR SHARE POWER IN ANY WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT. HE ADDED THAT FRIENDS IN MEDIA, SUCH AS IL GIORNALE AND SPECIFICALLY THOSE PRESENT, SHOULD DO THEIR PART IN HIGHLIGHTING STATEMENTS BY HIGH-RANKING ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS RATHER THAN SCRUTINIZING INTERPRETATIONS LEFTIST MEDIA MIGHT GIVE TO THESE STATEMENTS IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO TWIST THEM TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SERVE THEIR OWN OBJECTIVES. THREATS OF WHAT US WOULD DO "IF" WERE UNWISE AND AMBASSADOR THOUGHT IT BEST AVOID IFFY QUESTIONS.

5. ALTHOUGH AMBASSADOR USED EVERY CONCEIVABLE ARGUMENT TO PRESENT OUR OPPOSITION TO PCI, IT APPEARED FROM DISCUSSION THAT MONTANELLI AND ASSOCIATES WOULD NOT BE UNHAPPY TO SEE US "INTERFERE" IN ITALIAN POLITICAL PROCESS TO INSURE THAT PCI MADE NO FURTHER ADVANCES AND THAT DC NOT WEAKEN IN ITS RESOLVE TO KEEP PCI OUT.

6. CONCERNING ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION, VIEW FROM IL GIORNALE WAS GLOOMY. MONTANELLI, WHO HAS NO LOVE FOR THE DC, SAID THAT MORO IS KEY FIGURE AMONG CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. HE URGED THE AMBASSADOR TO SEE AND ENCOURAGE MORO (WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS LONELY AND MOODY MAN WITH ALMOST ARABIC CONCEPT OF TIME AND DEEPLY HELD BELIEF THAT ULTIMATELY CHURCH - AND THEREFORE DC - WOULD WIN OUT IN RIVALRY WITH COMMUNISTS) TO REMAIN FIRM AGAINST COMMUNISTS.

7. AMBASSADOR DESCRIBED HIS RELATIONS WITH MORO AND HOW DIFFICULT IT WAS TO GET TO SEE HIM. WHEREUPON MONTANELLI SAID THAT UNFORTUNATELY NEITHER MORO NOR ANY OF TRADITIONAL DC LEADERS KNEW HOW TO RELATE TO AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR; THAT, IN SHORT, DC LEADERS WERE BASICALLY "PROVINCIAL" IN THEIR OUTLOOK. MONTANELLI WAS ENCOURAGED

BY EMBASSY'S CULTIVATION OF YOUNGER ELEMENTS WITHIN DC AND HOPED THAT THIS WOULD HAVE SOME EFFECT ON TH DC'S INTERNAL EVOLUTION.

8. MONTANELLI THEN FOCUSED ON PRI LEADER UGO LAMALFA. HE SINCERELY REGRETTED HAVING HAD TO BREAK WITH LAMALFA BUT FELT THAT LA MALFA COULD NO LONGER BE TRUSTED. HE EVEN SUGGESTED THAT SOMEONE (NAMELY THE AMBASSADOR) SHOULD ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE AGNELLI (WHO HE CLAIMED WAS FINANCING PRI)HTO SHUT OFF FAUCET TO LAMALFA FOR HE WAS CAUSING NOTHING BUT TROUBLE.

9. AMBASSADOR RAISED MATTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS, NOTING THAT IL GIORNALE HAS ON OCCASION GONE OUT OF ITS WAY TO POINT OUT ALLEGED US ZIG-ZAGGING OR RETREATING ON SUBJECT. AMBASSADOR DESCRIBED PRESIDENT CARTER'S DEEPLY HELD PERSONAL CONVICTIONS CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BUT ADDED THAT HIS ACTIONS ALSO BASED ON PRAGMATIC POLITICAL MOTIVES. HE POINTED OUT THAT, PRIOR TO BELGRADE CSCE MEETINGS, AMBASSADOR GOLDBERG HAD HAD DIFFICULTY IN CONVINCING WESTERN EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES TO AGREE AGRRESIVE STRATEGY IN AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AS CONSEQUENCE, HE HAD INITIALLY TO TONE DOWN OR MODIFY US POSITION. HOWEVER, AS RECORD SHOWS, AMBASSADOR GOLDBERG HAD BEEN FORTHRIGHT IN HIS PURSUIT OF HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE AT BELGRADE AND USSR AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WERE DEFINITELY ON DEFENSIVE. CONSEQUENTLY, WE WERE PLEASED WITH PACE OF EVENTS AT BELGRADE. FINALLY, AMBASSADOR REMINDED HIS ITALIAN GUESTS THAT GOOD PORTION OF US MEDIA HAD INITIALLY CRITICESED PRESIDENT CARTER FOR LAUNCHING HIS HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN AND THAT, WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT PRESIDENT WAS NOT ABOUT TO LEAD A SINGLE-MINDED CRUSADE AT ANY COST, HE WAS CRITICIZED BY SAME MEDIA FOR RETREATING FROM EXTREME POSITIONS HE HAD NEVER TAKEN.

10. AT THIS POINT MONTANELLI BROKE IN FORCEFULLY SAYING THAT EUROPEAN WERE DISGRACEFUL IN THEIR LACK OF OUTSPOKENESS ON SUBJECT. TONINI COUNTERED WITH POINT THAT WHY, THEREFORE, DID BETTIZA WRITE EDITORIAL "THE ABSENT AMERICA"HWICH CLAIMED THAT, AS RESULT OF PRESIDENT'S CARTER'S ALLEGED ZIG-ZAGGING FOREIGN POLICY COURSE, EUROPE SHOULD REALIZE THAT IT HAD TO "GO IT ALONE"? NEITHER MONTANELLI NOR ANYONE ELSE PRESENT ATTEMPTED TO DEFEND BETTIZA AND ALL AGREED THAT US CHAMPIONING OF HUMAN RIGHTS WAS LAUDABLE AND EUROP'S LACK OF SUPPORT DEPLORABLE.

11. AS LENGTHY LUNCHEON-DISCUSSION BROKE UP, BOTH SIDES EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SIMILAR SESSIONS COULD BE HELD IN FUTURE EITHER IN MILAN OR ROME. ALL AGREED THT THIS KIND OF DIALOGUE WAS USEFUL.

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12. AMBASSADOR'S SPEECH SAME EVENING AT ELEGANT TIEPOLO ROOM OF ISPI DREW CREME OF MILAN INDUSTRIAL AND ACADEMIC WORLDS WHO FILLED ALL 170 SEATS AND SPILLED OVER INTO ADJACENT AREA. IT WAS LARGEST CROWD IN LIVING MEMORY FOR ISPI FUNCTION. GUESTS INCLUDED FIAT'S GIANNI AGNELLI, WHO IS ON ISPI BOARD BUT HAD NEVER BEFORE APPEARED AT ISPI-SPONSORED SPEECH; ALFA-ROMEO PRESIDENT GAETANO CORTESI; BOCCONI UNIVERSITY RECTOR INNOCENZO GASPARINI; LEOPOLDO PIRELLI; PREFECT AMARI; ALL SENIOR MILITARY COMMANDERS AND MAJOR CONSULS GENERAL. SPEECH WAS CO-SPONSORED BY UNIONE CRISTIANA IMPRENDITORI DEMOCRATICI (UCID).

13. AFTER SPEECH ISPI AND UCID HELD DINNER AT EXCLUSIVE UNION CLUB FOR ABOUT 25. DURING HOUR'S QUESTION PERIOD FOLLOWING AND WITH ISPI PRESIDENT, AMBASSADOR ENRICO AILLAUD, ACTING AS MODERATOR, WIDE RANGE OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL QUERIES AROSE THAT INDICATED LIVELY INTEREST IN US POLICY ON NUMBER OF FRONTS.

14. MAIN SUBJECTS WERE STRENGTH OF DOLLAR, AMERICAN TRADE DEFICIT, COMMODITY AGREEMENTS, AND BIG POWER RELATIONSHIPS.

15. ON STRENGTH OF DOLLAR, AMBASSADOR STRESSED THAT CARTER ADMINISTRATION WANTED STABLE DOLLAR. HE NOTED THAT DOLLAR HAD NOT SUFFERED GENERAL SLIP BUT HAD DECLINED ONLY RELATIVE TO MARK, SWISS FRANC, AND YEN, THREE STRONG TRADE-SURPLUS CURRENCIES.

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THAT WAS NOT PARTICULAR CAUSE FOR WORRY, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF EFFORTS WE WERE MAKING TO BRING OUT CURRENT ACCOUNTS WITH GERMANY AND JAPAN INTO BETTER BALANCE (SEE BELOW). BUT WHY, ASKED ONE INDUSTRIALIST, DID US NOT INTERVENE IN ALL THE SAME TO DEFEND

VALUE OF DOLLAR? AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED THAT JAMAICA AGREEMENT PROHIBITED SUCH INTERVENTION IN PRESENT SYSTEM OF FLOATING RATES EXCEPT IN CASES OF SPECULATIVE OR TURBULENT FLUCTUATIONS THAT DID NOT REFLECT UNDERLYING ECONOMIC FACTORS.

16. AS FAR AS US TRADE DEFICIT WAS CONCERNED, AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THINGS LOOKED GOOD DEAL BETTER FOR NEXT YEAR. TRADE EFFECTS OF RECENT DEVALUATION OF DOLLAR AGAINST MARK AND YEN WOULD START TO BE FELT WITHIN 3 TO 6 MONTHS TIME. MOREOVER, TWO OF BIGGEST IMPORTERS OF US GOODS, BRAZIL AND MEXICO, HAVE BEEN UNDERGOING IMPORT CUTBACK THAT NEXT YEAR WILL NO LONGER BE IN EFFECT, CAUSING THEIR PURCHASES FROM US TO INCREASE. RUSSIA, FINALLY, WOULD BE MAKING LARGE GRAIN PURCHASES DURING THE COMING YEAR. THEN THERE WERE MEASURES WE OURSELVES WERE TAKING. WE WERE PRESSING OUR SURPLUS TRADING PARTNERS TO DROP TARIFFS AND OTHER TRADE BARRIERS. THIS WAS ESPECIALLY TRUE REGARDING JAPAN, WHOSE REPRESENTATIVE IN WASHINGTON - AMBASSADOR USHIDA - WE WERE PRESSING HARD FOR SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS. AND PRES. CARTER, AS EVERYONE KNEW, WAS TRYING HIS UTMOST TO REDUCE OUR ENERGY IMPORT BILL. THAT AMOUNTED TO \$45 BILLION LAST YEAR, SUM THAT MORE THAN MATCHED \$30 BILLION TRADE DEFICIT. THUS IF PRESIDENT COULD MAKE DENT IN LATTER FIGURE, IT WOULD BE SIX SIGNIFICANT FOR OUR BALANCE OF PAYMENTS.

17. ON QUESTION OF US ATTITUDE TOWARD COMMODITY AGREEMENTS, AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT WE FAVOR THEM WHEN WE FEEL THEY WILL BE EFFECTIVE. ON THAT BASIS, WE HAVE JOINED IN SOME BUT NOT OTHERS.

18. THERE WAS GREAT INTEREST IN RELATIONS WITH USSR AND CHINA. AMBASSADOR STATED THAT WE WISHED FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH BOTH AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT DETENTE, THEREFORE, WAS STILL CARDINAL COMPONENT OF CARTER FOREIGN POLICY. ANSWERING QUESTIONER WHO WONDERED WHY US DID NOT USE GRAIN SALES TO APPLY PRESSURE TO SOVIETS, AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED THAT RUSSIANS COULD DO WITHOUT, IF NEED BE, THAT IN ANY CASE THERE WERE OTHER SUPPLIERS, THAT AMERICAN FARMERS WANTED BUYERS AND WOULD NOT SUPPORT SUCH POLICY, AND THAT THAT KIND OF PRESSURE ON RUSSIANS WOULD BE INEFFECTIVE ANYWAY. THAT WAS NOT WAY, SAID AMBASSADOR, TO ENCOURAGE POSITIVE COOPERATION OF TYPE WE NEEDED FROM RUSSIANS IN SPOTS LIKE MIDDLE EAST.

19. ON CHINA, AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT, ALTHOUGH PRC HAS NOT GIVEN UP DEMANDING TAIWAN, CHINESE KNEW THAT WAS NOT IN CARDS AND DID NOT LET IT INTERFERE WITH WHAT ARE OTHERWISE CONSTANTLY IMPROVING RELATIONS. HE SAID THAT CHINESE HAD BEEN NOTABLY FRIENDLY TO SECRETARY VANCE AND ASSISTANT SECY HOLBROOKE ON LATTERS' RECENT VISIT TO PRC, AND THAT OUR TRADE WITH PRC CONTINUED TO GROW.

20. FINALLY, YALTA CAME UP. DID WE CONSIDER DIVISION OF EUROPE BETWEEN US AND SOVIETS STILL VALID? AMBASSADOR DENIED QUESTION'S

PREMISS. US HAD NEVER, AT YALTA OR AFTERWARDS, GIVEN LICENSE TO RUSSIANS TO DOMINATE EASTERN EUROPE. WE AGREED UPON FREE ELECTIONS IN THOSE COUNTRIES IN 1945 AND THAT REMAINS OUR DESIRE.

21. UNDERLYING THE QUESTIONS OF THIS GROUP OF NORTHERN ITALY'S MOST INFLUENTIAL MENTHERE APPEARED TO BE LESS CONCERN FOR ITALY THAN FOR THE US. GUESTS SOUGHT ASSURANCES THAT USG WAS LOOKING AFTER ITSELF IN TOUGH WORLD OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND POLITICS. PERHAPS SIGNIFICANTLY, QUESTION OF OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT DID NOT ARISE. CONFIDENCE APPEARED TO EXIST THAT WE WOULD STICK WITH ITALY NO MATTER WHAT. ON THAT SUPPOSITION, MOST IMPORTANT AT MOMENT WAS WHETHER CARTER ADMINISTRATION WOULD CONTINUE TO MANAGE OUR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS WITH WISDOM NECESSARY TO KEEP US ON TOP.

22. CONCERNING AMBASSADOR'S PREFORMANCE ITSELF, FEEDBACK HAS BEEN VERY POSITIVE THOUGH WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SPEAK WITH ONLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TINY FRACTION OF THOSE WHO HEARD AMBASSADOR. CHRISTMAS RUSH HAS ALREADY ENGULFED MOST OF THEM.

23. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, SPOKEN WITH MONTANELLI, AILLAUD, THE PREFECT, GASPARINI AND OTHERS. THEY CONFIRMED EXCELLENT IMPRESSION MADE HERE. AMBASSADOR IS SEEN AS HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL, ERUDITE, SERIOUS SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL WITH VERY BROAD RANGE OF EXPERT KNOWLEDGE RELEVANT TO ITALY'S MOST PRESSING PROBLEMS. HIS GOOD WILL TOWARD ITALY, HIS COMMITMENT TO LIBERAL DEMOCRACY, HIS OPPOSITION TO COMMUNISM AND HIS ENERGY ARE NOW GENERALIZED KNOWLEDGE AMONG MILAN'S OPINION-MAKING ELITE.

24. I CANNOT GUARANTEE HOW IL GIORNALE WILL TREAT US IN THE FUTURE. BUT I BELIEVE THAT IT WILL BE BETTER THAN HERETOFOR. THE POINT MADE AT LUNCH THAT GIORNALE'S CASTING DOUBT UPON THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S FIRMNESS TOWARD COMMUNISM AND IN SUPPORT OF CIVIL RIGHTS PLAYED INTO LEFTIST HANDS, WAS NOT WITHOUT EFFECT. IT IS A POINT THAT MONTANELLI UNDERSTANDS AND THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO REPEAT TO HIM AND HIS STAFF.

25. IN SUM, THE IMAGE AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNITED STATES IN MILAN WERE SOLIDLY ENHANCED BY THE AMBASSADOR'S WORK HERE.FINA UNQUOTE GARDNER

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